

CITY OF SAN JOSÉ, CALIFORNIA Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement 801 North First Street, Room 400 San José, California 95110-1795	Hearing Date/Agenda Number <b>H.L.C. 12/4/02 Item ..</b>
	File Number <b>PDC 02-077</b>
	Application Type <b>Planned Development Rezoning</b>
	Council District <b>3</b>
	Planning Area <b>Central</b>
	Assessor's Parcel Number(s) <b>249-44-101</b>

  

<b>STAFF REPORT</b>
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION	Completed by: <b>John Davidson</b>
Location: <b>Northeast corner of East Julian and North First Streets (320 North First Street)</b>	
Gross Acreage: <b>0.6</b>	Net Acreage: <b>0.6</b>
Net Density: <b>66 DU/AC</b>	
Existing Zoning: <b>LI Light Industrial</b>	Existing Use: <b>Vacant surface parking lot</b>
Proposed Zoning: <b>A(PD) Planned Development</b>	Proposed Use: <b>Up to 40 single-family attached residential units</b>

  

GENERAL PLAN	Completed by: <b>JED</b>
Land Use/Transportation Diagram Designation <b>Residential Support for the Core (25+ DU/AC)</b>	Project Conformance: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> See Analysis and Recommendations

  

SURROUNDING LAND USES AND ZONING	Completed by: <b>JED</b>
North: <b>Office</b>	<b>LI Light Industrial</b>
East: <b>Office (Hensley Historic District)</b>	<b>LI Light Industrial and A(PD) Planned Development</b>
South: <b>High Density Residential</b>	<b>A(PD) Planned Development</b>
West: <b>High Density Residential</b>	<b>A(PD) Planned Development</b>

  

ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS	Completed by: <b>JED</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental Impact Report certified 4/27/99 <input type="checkbox"/> Negative Declaration circulated on <input type="checkbox"/> Negative Declaration adopted on	<input type="checkbox"/> Exempt <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Review Incomplete

  

FILE HISTORY	Completed by: <b>JED</b>
Annexation Title: <b>Original City</b>	Date: <b>March 27, 1850</b>

  

PLANNING DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approval <input type="checkbox"/> Approval with Conditions <input type="checkbox"/> Denial	Date: _____	Approved by: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Action <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recommendation

  

APPLICANT/OWNER	DEVELOPER
The Redevelopment Agency of the City of San Jose 50 West San Fernando Street, Ste. 1100 San Jose, CA 95113	Regis Homes c/o Paul Ring

## BACKGROUND

The City Council, acting as Redevelopment Agency Board, has selected Regis Homes to develop the subject Agency-owned site with high density housing. Regis is proposing a Planned Development Rezoning to allow up to 40 for-sale single-family attached dwelling units in a four story structure on a 0.6acre site at the northeast corner of East Julian and North First Streets within the Downtown Frame area.

The City Council, through the proposed rezoning, will establish allowable uses, project density, and development standards and regulations, including height limits, setbacks, parking requirements, and environmental mitigation. The site is within the permitting jurisdiction of the Planning Director, and so a Planned Development (PD) permit for final architectural design and detailing based upon the proposed rezoning will be processed by Planning staff. Planning staff will bring the more detailed PD Permit plans before the Historic Landmarks Commission prior to the Planning Director's decision on the permit.

The subject site is currently used for surface parking. The site is immediately west of the Hensley Historic District and three Contributing Structures (31, 33, and 37 East Julian Street) within the District. The Historic Resources Form for the three houses describes them in the following way:

This is a rare grouping of three large period revival residences. The eastern structure is a mixture colonial with mission revival details including low-pitched square bays, a low hipped central dormer and side dormer, an ornamental chimney stack, rows of ancones under the bays, a central façade second-story balcony with patterned wall, and a recessed veranda supported by severe doric columns. The two western structures are duplicate 2 ½ story colonial revivals. The colonial revivals have similar massing to the eastern structure, but are composed of different elements. They are dominated by a front gabled dormer with a compound round arch window, a centered curved bay with a curved balustrade, and a ground-floor veranda supported by wood Tuscan columns. Windows on all three buildings are generally single sash with small horizontal transom lights above. However, it is the similarity of these three large structures which sets up an almost row house streetscape – very unique in San Jose. Wrought iron banisters on all three structure's entrance stairs and the mission revival veranda balustrade are the only apparent exterior alterations.

Surrounding uses include the high density three to four story Villa Torino apartments to the west across North First Street, The Plaza, a high density three and four story condominium project to the south across East Julian Street, the Santa Clara County Law Library to the north. The aforementioned historic Victorians currently used as offices are to the east.

The project's unit mix includes four one-bedroom units and 36 two-bedroom units. Project parking occurs in a two-level garage (at-grade and basement). The project also includes an interior courtyard area. The building is finished in stucco with a sloped, standing seam metal roof, and metal-framed windows. The parking garage is accessed from East Julian Street, while the primary pedestrian entrance is at the corner of North First and Julian Streets.

The project was reviewed at the October 16, 2002 Design Review Subcommittee. The synopsis

of that meeting is as follows:

“The applicant explained the project. Committee members raised questions about the prominent garage entrances on Julian Street in contrast to the more contextual stoops along First Street and the industrial nature of the proposed architecture.

Staff noted that the interface with the side yard of the historic structures worked well, while the front yard setback along Julian was not compatible with the substantial front yard setback of the historic neighborhood.

Some committee members felt the setback was consistent with the general density of the development along First Street, while others expressed concern about the proposed project’s potential to block the view of the historic structures along Julian from First Street.”

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

The environmental impacts of this project were addressed by a Final SEIR entitled, "Downtown Strategy Plan," and certified on April 27, 1999, by the City of San Jose City Council. Additional site-specific environmental analysis has been completed for the project, including preparation of a noise report, tree survey, and soils report. Mitigation measures identified in these reports have been incorporated into the project, so that the project will not have an unacceptable environmental impact.

## **GENERAL PLAN CONFORMANCE**

The proposal is consistent with the San Jose 2020 General Plan Land Use/Transportation designation of Residential Support for the Core (25+ DU/AC). This designation allows high density residential uses to create a balanced community for the urban core of San Jose.

## **ANALYSIS**

The primary historic project issue is the project’s compatibility with adjacent historic structures. There are three main issues in relation to the proposed project’s compatibility with the neighboring historic structures at 31, 33, and 37 East Julian Street:

- a) the proposed side setback adjacent to the Mezzetti building (31 East Julian Street),
- b) the proposed front setback along E. Julian Street, and
- c) the massing, articulation and overall style of the proposed building in relation to the Mezzetti building and the adjoining Hensley Historic District.

**Side Setback.** The proposed side setback for the Regis project from the Mezzetti building is 14 feet. The side setback of the Mezzetti Building from the property line is approximately 5 feet, and so the total distance between the proposed project and the existing building is 19 feet. This setback prevents the 50-foot height (four stories) of the proposed project from looming over the 2-½ story Mezzetti Building. The design of the building façade and landscaping will be refined at the PD Permit stage. Staff’s expectation is the building wall will be well articulated and complemented by interesting, attractive landscaping.

**Julian Street Setback.** The project proposes a reduced setback from that found on the north side of Julian Street in the vicinity of the site. The historic structures at 31, 33, and 37 East Julian Street, and the Villa Torino project, across North First Street, are setback approximately 30'. The proposed minimum project setback from East Julian Street is zero, so that a portion of the project facing Julian Street would be separated from the street by only a 12' public sidewalk.

At the eastern end of the project frontage, the applicant is proposing a 7' wide notch in the eastern corner of the front façade, in order to increase the visibility of the historic structures at 31, 33, and 37 East Julian Street. The notch is setback 30', in the same plane as the front of the Mezzetti building, and would allow views of the Mezzetti building at up to a 45 degree angle from the west.

Staff understands the owners of the Mezzetti Building have expressed reservations about the proposed front setback. However, the subject site is not within the boundaries of the Hensley Historic District. Further, the reduced project setback does not extend the full width of the Julian Street frontage, and would have no direct impact on the historic structures at 31, 33, and 37 East Julian Street.

Staff believes it is excessive and unrealistic to require a 30' setback from Julian Street. The site is a relatively small, infill parcel within a highly urban setting. The primary planning goal for the site is to achieve high density, while still respecting the scale of surrounding development. Requiring a 30' setback (effectively 42' from Julian Street when the public sidewalk is included) would frustrate this goal and severely limit the development potential of the site, such that the opportunity cost to the project would far outweigh the setback's benefit. The historic structures at 31, 33, and 37 East Julian Street will remain visible from North First Street, and staff believes the project design provides an adequate transition along the Julian Street frontage.

**Project Design.** The proposed building is modern in style, with definite residential elements. The roof forms are hipped, and residential in character. Residential features, such as balconies, trellises, and chimneys, are readily apparent. The stucco and brick siding and standing seam roof are a definite contrast with the wood siding and shingle roofs of the Mezzetti building and the adjacent Hensley Historic District.

The windows are large, with a number of windows extending between two floors, in contrast to the smaller windows on the adjacent Mezzetti Building.

As viewed from Julian Street, the massing of the Regis project is divided into two halves, by the entry stair and the project courtyard. This massing of the proposed project echoes the articulation of the twin buildings directly to the east. However, the overall volumes are much blockier than the adjacent historic buildings, creating sufficient differentiation.

Although the project is distinctly modern in terms of the massing and details, it is also distinctively residential. The architecture is larger and more imposing than the adjacent historic homes, which is to be expected with an infill project at the edge of the City's downtown core. The height is mitigated by the proposed project interior side yard setback. Overall, staff believes that the contrasting style of the proposed building is appropriate to distinguish the new project from the adjacent historic structures.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Planning staff recommends the Historic Landmarks Commission recommend approval of the proposed project, and provide comments to the Director of Planning regarding the proposed interface and compatibility with the adjacent historic structures. The Historic Landmarks Commission's recommendation and comments will be forwarded to the Planning Commission, scheduled to consider the project December 11, and City Council, scheduled to consider the project December 17.

c: Paul Ring, Regis Homes,  
Craig McCafferty, Redevelopment Agency